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West Virginia Library Commission
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West Virginia Library Commission Commends the Leadership and Support of the Ohio County Board of Education

Charleston, WV. Members of the Ohio County Board of Education, county educational leaders, and instructional personnel were publicly commended by resolution of the West Virginia Library Commissioners at their March 21st meeting for the Board's historic and ongoing participation with and support of the Ohio County Public Library (OCPL), located in Wheeling.

The Commissioners made special recognition of Board President James M. Jorden and Ohio County Board of Education members' public affirmation to continue financial support of the Library for the remainder of this fiscal year and throughout the next fiscal year. In February 2013, the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals ruled that requiring boards of education to fund libraries from special laws is unconstitutional, but advised that non-mandatory funding is acceptable. Commissioners lauded the board's intention to continue financially supporting the Ohio County Public Library, not only in the upcoming year, but for "many years to come."

Commission Chair, Betty B. Gunnoe noted, "Within the Northern Panhandle, and elsewhere in the state, libraries have historically enjoyed the active support of local school systems and boards of education in delivering services and programs to West Virginia residents. Before the Civil War, educators in Ohio County provided free public education, which ultimately led to the creation and funding of a local public library at the beginning of the 20th Century. Ohio County educators have always been library leaders."

When the Tax Limitation Act of 1932 eliminated the Wheeling Independent School District's capability to fund the public library, local educational leaders supported the successful passage of a Special Funding Law enabling dedicated funding of the Ohio County Public Library through a portion of the annual board of education levy — the first law of its kind in the state.

State Librarian Karen E. Goff reiterated, "The relationship between public libraries and educators in West Virginia remains strongly symbiotic and vital with the ultimate goal of creating and supporting a state of lifelong learners. The local public library has long been recognized as the gateway to lifelong learning and in this state continues to effectively partner with local school systems and educators to positively impact the lives of our fellow citizens. In Wheeling, the Ohio County Board of Education has boldly proclaimed their support for the public library and all that it can offer to Northern Panhandle residents."

Copies of the resolution will be presented to the President of the Ohio County Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools. The resolution may be viewed at:
www.librarycommission.wv.gov/publications/Pages/Press_releases.aspx.

The West Virginia Library Commission serves the people of West Virginia and encourages lifelong learning, individual empowerment, civic engagement and an enriched quality of life by enhancing library and information services for all West Virginians. Find more information at: librarycommisison.wv.gov.